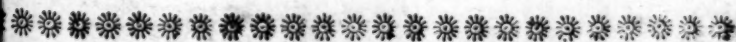




Here read, and see, how far the Practice of a Son may differ from the truly evangelical Principles of an honoured Father : Yea, how little a Person's Prefaces, and Publications, can be depended upon as the Rule of his future, unprovoked Practice. And if the Separatists of these Times cannot see themselves in the Glass held up in this Performance, it must either be, because they are unacquainted with their own Likeness, or, because they shut their Eyes and will not see.

This valuable Performance is well worthy the attentive Perusal of every Member of the Church of Christ, who wishes to be guided by the Precepts and Example of his Lord and Saviour : More especially in these Days of religious Diffipation, when, to their everlasting Shame, Men of itching Ears, are fast fulfilling the Apostle's Prophecy, " by heaping to themselves Teachers " after their own Lusts."



Here read, and let me say, how
 may differ from the true
 or an honest man's
 son's Paces, and Paces, and
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 Paces. And if the Paces of his father
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 could they their lives and well

"after the above said"

The EVIL *and* DANGER of SCHISM.

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S E R M O N,

By the late LEARNED and PIOUS

Mr. THOMAS BOSTON,

Minister of the Gospel at ETTERICK, 15

The THIRD EDITION.

With the PREFACE, prefixed to the second Edition,
by the Reverend Mr. THOMAS BOSTON the
Author's Son, now separate from the established
Church.

P R I N T E D,

ONE THOUSAND SEVEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY SIX.



T H E P R E F A C E

THE following sermon needs no other recommendation, than to assure the publick, that the author of it was that great and good man whose name it bears in the title-page, “ and whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches.” It was first published in the year 1738, when the secession from the established church of Scotland was upon the growing hand. And being credibly informed, that several people in that way have the assurance to say the sermon is not Mr. BOSTON’s, or that it is somehow adulterate, I embrace the opportunity of declaring to the world, that the following sermon was preached by the late Reverend Mr. BOSTON, my worthy and much honoured father, at Etterick, in the year 1708, on occasion of reading from the pulpit a sentence of the Commission of the General Assembly of this church against Messrs. *Macmillan* and *Macneil*; and that the printed copy of it is in every respect agreeable to the original written with his own hand, which is in my custody.

The sermon discovers the truly evangelical spirit of its author; a spirit tender of the peace, as well as the purity of the church. No man could be more tenacious than he, of what he judged truth; while, at the same time, he could love, esteem and honour his brethren who differed from him, and very freely hold communion with them. This being my father’s real and well-known character, it surprised me to find, that several people gave it out, with great assurance, That, had he been living in our world, he had long ere now left the established church,

church, because of her corruptions. How they came by this spirit of divination, I shall not pretend to say. Mean time, the following sermon seems to be no great evidence of what they assert; nor was there any thing in the author's conduct while he lived, that looked like it. I remember, many years ago, some honest country people, who did not separate from the established church, but had such scruples at their own ministers, that they could not receive sealing ordinances from them, addressed him most earnestly to baptize their children upon lines from their fellowship meetings. This he would by no means consent to do; because he thought it a breach on the peace and order of the church, and a cruel weakning the hands of his fellow servants. Accordingly he wrote a letter to one of them, in which he thus expresses himself; "The way I have learned Christ, is to entertain those principles and practices which I apprehend him to teach me in his word, be for them, or against them, who will; and to have such a sense of the imperfection cleaving to the best while here, and of the design of Providence in leaving it for our trial, that I dare not think to look him in the face, and set myself to counter-work others in their endeavours to bring sinners to him, because they see not with my light, and so take other courses than I in some particulars."

I have sometimes thought, that a Secession from the established church, was it managed with prudence and temper, and with the sole view of promoting christianity, might be of considerable use. But alas! it is to be feared, that the Secession in this nation has contribute but little to the revival of real religion, tho' a great deal to the fomenting
a spirit

a spirit of wrath, bitterness and persecution; especially since the preachers began to multiply, and to make room for themselves by delivering so many of their brethren into the hands of the devil. This dreadful Antichristian Bull, designed to fix a mark of infamy on some of the chosen and faithful servants of Jesus Christ, has opened the mouths of the wicked, saddened the hearts of the saints, and astonished the most part of sober and thinking people. Who would have imagined, that men who had been for a course of years crying out of the tyranny and oppression of the church of Scotland, would have given the world such a flagrant instance of both in their own conduct? Oh, how pitiable is the case of the poor people, who have their heads and hands filled with Acts, Declarations and Testimonies, about Church Government, Patronages, Burgher-oaths, &c. while their hearts are filled with pride and self conceit, and with envy and bitterness against all but these of their own party! "O my
 " my soul, come not thou into their secret," in point of church communion; "unto their assembly, mine honour, be not thou united," in point of separation.

Divided sentiments, and divided affections, I take to be two very different things. The former is the natural and necessary consequence of the present imperfect state of saints; the latter is highly provoking to God, and dishonourable to his Son Jesus Christ, as it is diametrically opposite to the new commandment of brotherly love, upon which we find no small stress laid in the New Testament. There it is made the distinguishing badge and mark of Christ's disciples: "By this shall all men know
 " that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to
 " another."

“another.” John xiii. 35. The disciples of John the Baptist were distinguished by the austerity and monkishness of their behaviour : The disciples of the Pharisees were known by their broad phylacteries, and the enlarged borders of their garments : The disciples of the Heathen Philosophers had their respective peculiarities in their opinions or practice, whereby it was manifest to which sect they belonged. Now, when Jesus Christ came into the world, and made disciples in it, he appointed that mutual love, harmony and concord should be their distinguishing characteristick. Oh the beautiful simplicity, purity and humility that runs thro’ the whole gospel of Jesus Christ ! He does not say, as vain men would readily expect, By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye can cleanse the lepers, cure the sick, raise the dead, cast out devils, and speak with divers tongues ; but he makes that plain and practical thing, brotherly love, the criterion of his disciples. The power of working miracles, like the gift of prophecy, was not always confined to the moral character. Many in the church of Corinth excelled in spiritual gifts, while they were living in strife and contention, and likewise drenched in fleshly abominations. They wanted the peculiar badge of discipleship mentioned by our Saviour, while there were envy, strife and divisions among them ; one saying, “ I am of Paul,” and another, “ I of Apollos.” 1 Cor. i. 12.

Moreover, the scripture represents our walking in brotherly love and unity as a proper mean of convincing the infidel world of the truth and excellency of the Christian religion. Remarkable to this purpose are these words of our Saviour in his prayer before his passion : “ That they all may be one, as
“ thou

"thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they
 "also may be one in us; THAT THE WORLD
 "MAY BELIEVE THAT THOU HAST SENT ME."

John xvii. 21. The first Christians, by their walking in love and unity among themselves, gave such an amiable representation of their religion to their Pagan neighbours, that many of them renounced their own, and embraced it. Mankind have, in all ages, been more pliant to example than to precept, reason, or argument. And I am apt to believe, that if Christians would walk in love, and exemplify the other excellent precepts of the gospel in their lives, saying much less, and doing a great deal more, it would be a more effectual remedy against the prevailing infidelity of the age, than all the elaborate defences and apologies for Christianity that have hitherto appeared.

Neither do I design the least reflection on these learned and worthy persons who have signalized themselves in the defence of our holy religion against the bold attacks of Atheists and Deists; their works praise them in the gates; and I acknowledge myself, among others, much obliged to several of them, for their clear and conclusive reasonings on some contraverted points. But I would have the bulk and body of our people to be convinced, that it is in their power, tho' they want languages and learning, to do a great deal towards gaining the infidel world, namely, by their walking in brotherly love, in holy harmony and concord with one another, and exemplifying the other precepts of the gospel in their conversation.

The unsuccessfulness of the gospel is a common complaint, for which there is too much ground.

But

But were we to ask the several divided parties in our Zion, what they judge to be the cause of it? each of them would resolve it into something that is immediately connected with their particular scheme or system: However, if we will go to the New Testament for the solution of this problem, we will find, that the new commandment of brotherly love its growing obsolete, and out of practice with the most part of professors, and a wrathful, bitter, and divisive spirit entering in among them, are both the causes and the evidences of the gospel's unsuccessfulness. See 1 Cor. iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Gal. v. 13, 14, 15, 19, 20, 21. Jam. iii. 13, 14, 15, 16.

Christians, I beseech you consider that deep concern for your union among yourselves, express by your Redeemer in his valedictory prayer, John xvii. 21, 22, 23. "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us." There ye have this Oneness twice in a breath. "And the glory which thou gavest me, I have given them, that they may be one, even as we are one." Here we have it a third time. "I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one." This is the fourth time he comes over it, so very intent was he upon it. Here is a great deal of work made about a thing that is almost gone into desuetude among us. But did we rate and value things after the example of Jesus Christ, it would not be so. Should you hear a minister, with great warmth, pressing some duty from the pulpit, and when he returns home, should you at his closet door hear him wrestling with God in prayer, that he would give the people what he had so warmly prest upon them; you would easily believe the good man was deeply concerned

concerned in the matter. What Christ had insisted on most in preaching, that he enlarged most upon in prayer : He had preached peace to them, peace was the legacy he desired to leave with them ; and after all, he puts up with great earnestness, no less than four petitions for it at a throne of grace.

Surely it would be most pleasing and delightful to your dearest Redeemer, now exalted at the right hand of God, to look down among you, and behold you walking in love, in harmony and concord with one another. This would be the answer of his valedictory prayer, and the fruit of the travel of his soul. Why then will you grieve and vex your best friend, your friend at the court of heaven, with your clamour and noise, your wrath and bitterness, your strife and contention ? Methinks I hear him addressing you from heaven in such words as these : “ O
“ my children, have ye forgotten, or have ye
“ willingly laid aside the very badge of your Christi-
“ an profession, the distinguishing character of the
“ heavenly family, while, instead of mutual love
“ and friendship, ye are daily biting and devouring
“ one another ? Is this all the fruit of my pacifica-
“ tory sacrifice offered for you ? Is this all the in-
“ fluence of my sanctifying spirit upon you ? There
“ is but little in your differences, but there is great
“ danger and disgrace in your dissensions. Should
“ ye, the children of the same family, who lay to-
“ gether in the same womb of election, and are
“ born to the same inheritance ;—should ye, whose
“ names I bear together on my heart, and present
“ unto God, be thus split and divided from one a-
“ nother in your affections ? Will ye rend and tear
“ my mystical body ? Will ye crucify me afresh,
“ and

“ and expose me to open shame by this most un-
 “ christian spirit and behaviour? Do not I bear with
 “ you all, with your ignorance, your frowardness,
 “ your follies and frailties? and will you bear no-
 “ thing with one another? Do not I hold commu-
 “ nion with you all? and are ye crumbled into
 “ sects and parties, heartily hating one another?
 “ Is the old Corinthian clamour and noise raised a-
 “ mong you, some crying, *I am of Paul*, others,
 “ *I am of Apollos*? Is this the treatment ye give
 “ the Holy Spirit whom I have sent into your
 “ hearts? Will ye thus grieve and vex your Com-
 “ forter? Will ye, by your strife and contention,
 “ provoke him to quit his habitation? Will ye
 “ spoil the holy angels of their joy, and give ground
 “ of triumph to the spirits of darkness, and their
 “ auxiliaries in the world, who impatiently wait
 “ for your stumbling and falling, that they may
 “ insult over you, crying, Aha, aha! so we would
 “ have it?”

As serious Christians are agreed in the Essentials
 of our holy religion, even tho' they should differ in
 opinion about lesser matters, this ought not to di-
 vide them in Affection; nor can such differences be
 justly urged, as a sufficient cause for that monstrous
 thing Schism in the church of Christ. Indeed, should
 any man deny the doctrine of Original Sin, the De-
 crees of God, and in the business of Salvation as-
 scribe more to man's free will than to God's free
 grace; should he laugh at Justification thro' the
 imputed Righteousness of Christ, and sneer at the
 doctrine of the Saints Perseverance; especially,
 should he deny a Trinity of Persons in the Godhead.
 —As these are the distinguishing doctrines of Re-
 vealed Religion, I leave it to all who are serious
 and

and sound in the faith, what they are to think concerning such people.—I beg leave to quote a passage from the celebrated Mr. HARVEY, whom no man in his senses will think to be either enthusiast or bigot. After this excellent writer has observed, that differences about lesser matters may subsist among Christians, where the Christian love continues, he adds, “ But if one denies the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, and degrades the incarnate God to the meanness of a mere creature ; if another cries up the worthiness of human works, and depreciates the alone meritorious righteousness of the glorious Mediator ; if a third addresses the incommunicable honours to a finite being, and bows to the image, or prays to the saint :—These are errors, in my opinion, unhappily derogatory to the Redeemer’s dignity, and not a little prejudicial to the comfort of his people : Against these, therefore to remonstrate, bespeaks not the censorious bigot, but the friend of truth, and the lover of mankind.—Whereas to stand neuter and silent, while such principles are propagated, might be an instance of criminal remissness, rather than of Christian moderation.” *Meditat. vol. I. p. 173, 174. edit. 6th.*

To conclude, “ Let us, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another.—And, above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.” Col. iii. 12, 13, 14. “ If there be therefore any Consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any
“ bowels

“ bowels and mercies ; fulfil ye my joy, that ye be
“ like-minded, having the same love, being of one
“ accord, of one mind.” Philip. ii. 1, 2. To pro-
mote this noble temper and disposition of soul, was
the design of the author of the ensuing discourse :
And that it may be blest of God for that effect, is
the prayer of him who desires to love all these, of
whatsoever denomination they be, that love our
Lord Jesus Christ.

OXNAM-MANSE,
Jan. 23. 1753.

THOMAS BOSTON.

T H E
D A N G E R of S C H I S M.

I CORINTHIANS, i. 10.

Now, I beseech you, Brethren, by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same Thing, and that there be no Divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together, in the same Mind, and in the same judgment.

THE church of Corinth was now lying bleeding of her wounds, given her, not by open and avowed enemies, but by her own children, some saying they were of PAUL, others that they were of APOLLOS, &c. The apostle applies himself to the curing of this rent and broken church, in the words of the text, which is a most pathetic exhortation to unity. In the words we have three things :

I. The compellation, BRETHREN : It is a kindly compellation, whereby he insinuates himself into their affections, or endeavours so to do ; for it is hard for faithful ministers to get people's affections kept, where once divisions enter. In this compellation there is an argument for unity : He minds them that they are Brethren ; and it is a shameful thing for brethren to fall by the ears ; " Let there be no strife, I pray thee, (says Abraham to Lot) betwixt me and thee, &c. for we be Brethren." Gen. xiii. 8. And Joseph says to his brethren, " See that ye fall not out by the way." Gen. xiv. 24.

A

II. There

II. There is a most pithy obsecration, "I beseech you, by the name of the Lord Jesus Christ." Paul turns a petitioner to them for the church's peace, and begs of them, as he did of the Jailor, Acts xvi. 28. that they would do themselves no harm, but lay by the sword of contention; and, that it might have the more weight with their consciences, he interposeth the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, "I beseech you (says he) by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, &c." It implies two things, 1. It is as much as if he had said, As ye have any regard to the authority of the Lord Jesus Christ, who hath so often enjoined peace, unity, and brotherly love to his followers, beware of divisions. It is not I, (as if he had said) but Christ, the prince of peace, that requires this of you. 2. It is as much as if he had said, As ye love the Lord Jesus, as ye tender his honour and glory, speak the same thing, and let there be no divisions among you; for the name of Christ sadly suffers by your contentions, factions and divisions. The apostle's beseeching of them notes his gentleness, but withal his vehemency of spirit, intreating with them for the peace and unity of the church; he handles their wounds tenderly, yet so as they might see he was in good earnest to have them healed. It imports also, how heavy their contentions were to him, how grateful it would be to him if they would unite, and how grievous if they should still continue their rents; therefore he obtests them, and after a sort adjures them by the name of the Lord, that they would all speak the same thing, and let no divisions be among them: If I cannot obtain this of you, says he, for my own sake, yet let me obtain it of you for Christ's sake. This is the manner of his exhortation.

III. We

III. We have the matter of his exhortation, which lies in three things.

1. He exhorts them to unity of principles, "that ye all speak the same thing;" he beseecheth them, that they would not vent principles contrary to the truth, and to one another; for now, instead of unity, some were crying one thing, some another, like that confused multitude, Acts xxi. 34. there was nothing but contention and contradiction among them, till some of them came at length to deny the resurrection, 1 Cor. xv.

2. He dehorts them from *Divisions*; the word in the Greek is *Schisms*, as ye may see in the margins of some of your Bibles: The word properly signifies a Cutting or Section in a solid body, as in the cleaving of wood, when the parts of it before united are rent asunder. Thus the one church of Corinth was rent asunder into divers parties and factions, some following one minister, some following another; therefore says the apostle, "Is Christ divided?" 1 Cor. i. 13. As if he should say, why, seeing there is but one Christ, are there so many bodies? Where will you get a Christ to head your different and divided party? Through these divisions among them, it would seem from 1 Cor. xi. 33. they had separate communions, they would not tarry for one another. The apostle also taxeth their divisions, "For whereas there is among you envying, strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal?" 1 Cor. iii. 3. Where the word translated *Divisions* properly signifies *separate Standing*, where one party stands upon one side, and another party on another side,

side. It denotes such dissension, wherein men separate one from another.

3. He exhorts them to amend what was amiss already among them in that matter, "to be perfectly joined together," in opposition to their contentions and divisions. The word in the original is very emphatick, and signifies two things, *first*, To restore disjointed members into their proper places again, "Restore such an one." Gal. vi. 1. It is a metaphor from Chirurgeons setting members in joint again; as if he had said, set such an one in joint again: So it aims at healing the church of her rents, restoring such as had separate and withdrawn. *Secondly*, It signifies to perfect and establish in the state to which a person or thing is restored; and so it denotes a firm union betwixt the members of that church: He would have them compacted together as a body, in which all the parts do fitly cleave together, each of them in its proper place; and withal he adds here the bonds of this union, "the same mind," that is, the same heart, will, and affections, as the word *Mind* is taken Rom. vii. 25. "and the same judgement" or opinion anent matters; if the last cannot be got, yet the first may. From the words, we draw these following doctrines.

Doctrine 1. That schism and division is an evil incident to the churches of Christ while in this world.

Doct. 2. That professors ought to beware of schism and division, as they tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Doct. 3. Where schism and division enter into a church, there will be great heats, diversity, yea contrariety of opinions, people contradicting one another

another in matters of religion, " that ye all speak
" the same thing, &c."

Doct. 4. That however hard it be, yet it is possible to get a rent church healed.

Doct. 5. That it is the duty of all church members to endeavour the unity of the church, and the cure of rents; and particularly, it is the duty of disjointed members to take their own places in the body again.

Lastly, That schisms and divisions, as they are grievous to all the sons of peace, so they are in a special manner heavy and afflicting to faithful ministers of the gospel of peace.

Here is work shapen out for many days, but I design not to insist.

As to the *first* of the *Doctrines*, to wit, That schism and division is an evil incident to the churches of Christ in this world, 1. I shall illustrate the truth of this doctrine. 2. I shall give you some observes as to the rise and way of carrying on this sad plague in churches.

And I challenge your attention, and beseech you by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, without prejudice, ye will hear and consider what I am to say; and if I say any thing contrary to the word of God, reject it; but what I may say, as agreeable to God's word, I require it may have place in, and weight with your consciences. I shall endeavour to hold off personal reflections, but must take liberty freely to handle the cause.

I. Then I shall illustrate this sad doctrine. Alas! it is written, I may say, in letters of the blood of
our

our mother, who cries out, "She is wounded in the house of her friends." This broken bleeding church, exposed to the laughter of Papists and malignants by her divisions, is a sad instance of it. Now, seeing some are apt to stumble at all religion, by reason of our divisions, and others are apt to pride themselves in them, I shall, for the sake of both, shew, that these things are no uncouth, strange, or new things. For which consider.

1. These things are foretold in the scriptures. Our Lord Christ has given us fair warning, Matth. x. 34, 35, 36. "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth, I came not to send peace but a sword; for I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother," and so forth. Not that this is the kindly and native effect of the gospel of peace, but so it proves, by reason of the corruptions of men. The apostle tells the church of Ephesus, "Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them." Acts xx. 30. I shall only add another scripture, "After their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears, and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, &c." 2 Tim. iv. 3. 4. From all which we may see, that church renters shall not be wanting, nor shall they want success.

2. Consider the sad experience of the church in several ages; I shall give you two instances out of the Old Testament, the first you have Num. xvi. Even when the church had a Moses and Aaron in it, there was a violent schism set a-foot in it by Korah, Dathan and Abiram; that this business was not so much

much a sedition in the state as a schism in the church, (tho' I deny not but there was something of sedition in it, for schism and sedition go often together) is clear from the great cause of the quarrel, which was about the priesthood, as is clear from Num. xvi. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. which ye may read at your leisure, but consider especially the 10 and 11 verses, where Moses says, "And seek ye the priesthood also? For which cause both thou and all thy company are gathered together against the Lord; and what is Aaron that ye murmur against him?" Compare with this Jude 11. where the seducers, the disturbers of the church are said to perish in the gainsaying of Core. Many were led aside into this schism, Num. xvi. 19. "And Korah gathered all the congregation against them," viz. against Moses and Aaron; two of the heads of it, being called to come before Moses, sent him a declinature, stuffed with scandalous defamations against him, Num. xvi. 12, 13, 14. "And Moses sent to call Dathan and Abiram the sons of Eliah: Which said, We will not come up. Is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, &c." Yea, when God himself had inflicted the censure on them, the people would not quit their good Opinion of them; but as it is in the 41 verse, "they murmured against Moses and Aaron, saying, ye have killed the people of the Lord." Another notable schism was that made by the ten tribes, 1 Kings xii. where two things are very remarkable, *first*, The rise of it, their dissatisfaction with the civil government, whereupon they refused to own Rehoboam as their king, and also separated from the church of Jerusalem, who owned his authority, tho'

tho' he was very far degenerate from the piety and wisdom of David and Solomon. *Second Thing* remarkable in it, is the way how it was maintained, viz. by priests that were not of the sons of Levi, verse 31. of that chapter, that is, men who had no right to the priestly office. The New Testament is so full of dismal accounts this way, that there is not almost an epistle written, wherein we have not something of church rents and divisions, exhortations to unity, or some one thing or another of that kind. See Rom. xvi. 17, 18. "Now I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such, serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." For the 1st epistle to the Corinthians, read our text and downwards. See also 2 Cor. x, xi, xii. throughout, where Paul is put to defend himself against the slanders cast on him by false teachers, and to compare himself with them. As to the epistle to the Gallatians, I need not cite chapter and verse, the body of that epistle being against them that troubled the churches of Galatia. Eph. iv. ye have a pathetical exhortation to unity, from verse 1. to 17. Philip. ii. 1. and downwards, "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the spirit, if any bowels of mercy: Fulfil ye my joy, that ye may be like minded." Col. ii. 18. and downwards, "Let no man beguile you of your reward. Wherefore are ye subject to ordinances? touch not, taste not, handle not; which things indeed have a shew of wisdom, &c." The Thessalonians are exhorted "To warn them that are
" unruly."

“ unruly.” 1 Theſſal. v. 14. In 2 Theſſal. ii. 2. there are ſome troubling the church, and ſhaking them in their minds by their doctrine. 1 Tim. vi. 3, 4. “ If any man teach otherwiſe,—he is proud, “ knowing nothing, but doting about queſtions and “ ſtrifes of words, &c.” and chap. i. 6. 7 “ From “ which ſome having ſwerved, have turned aſide un- “ to vain jangling, deſiring to be teachers of the “ law, underſtanding neither what they ſay, neither “ whereof they affirm.” The apoſtle ſpeaks of ſome “ that creep into houſes, and lead captive fil- “ ly women,—and that reſiſt the truth, as Jannes “ and Jambres withſtood Moſes.” 2 Tim. iii. 6. 8. He tells him, “ he muſt ſtop the mouths of ſome “ who ſubvert whole houſes, teaching things which “ they ought not.” Titus i. 10. In the epiſtle to Philemon a ſingle perſon is to unite him and Oneti- mus. In the epiſtle to the Hebrews the apoſtle tax- eth ſome that forſook the church aſſemblies, “ Not “ forſaking the aſſembling of ourſelves together, as “ the manner of ſome is.” Heb. x. 25. “ But if “ ye have bitter envyings (in the Greek it is bitter “ zeal) and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not: This “ wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but is earthly, “ ſenſual, devilish :---But the wiſdom that is from “ above, is firſt pure, then peaceable, &c. and the “ fruit of righteouſneſs is ſown in peace of them “ that make peace.” James iii. 14. &c. “ Final- “ ly, brethren, be all of one mind.” 1 Pet. iii. 8. The whole of 2 Pet. ii. treats of falſe teachers. “ They went out from us, but they were not of “ us.” 1 John ii. 19. “ If there come any unto “ you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not “ into your houſe, neither bid him God ſpeak.” 2 John 10. In 3 John 9, 10. we find a Diotrephes
B prating

prating against the apostle "with malicious words." Read the whole epistle of Jude, for I need not cite a verse or two of it to our purpose. See also the 2d and 3d chapters of Revelation. The church of Ephesus had tried these that said they were apostles and were not, Rev. ii. 2. Smyrna was troubled with these that said they were Jews and were not, but were the synagogue of Satan, ver. 9. so was Philadelphia, chap. iii. 9. the church of Pergamus had them that held the doctrine of Balaam, Rev. ii. 14. In Thyatira was Jezabel teaching and seducing, v. 20.

Here is a cloud of witnesses from whom we may clearly learn two lessons.

First, That tho' the apostles themselves were alive to guide and govern the churches, yet they would not be able to prevent schisms, divisions, and renting of churches.

A *second* lesson we may learn from them is, That those who had most of the Spirit of God were of the most peaceable temper, and most tender of the peace of the church, most careful to preserve it where it was intire, and most careful to restore it where it was lost.

If we take a view of after-times, we shall find schism and division infecting the church. When the Pagan persecution was over, the fire of contention burnt up the church. Then was that in the Rev. viii. 5. accomplished; "Fire from the altar was cast in-
"to the earth." When Constantine the Great had restored peace unto the church, she was miserably defaced by the schism of the Donatists, who separated from the church, at first, to eschew the impurity of promiscuous communion. This schism last-
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ed more than two hundred years. They held, that men were defiled with the corruptions of these with whom they kept church communion, and that there was no other true church but their own. That which led them to these extravagancies, was, that the church kept, in ministerial communion with her, one Cæcilian, whom the Donatists would have had deposed; because, as they alledged, that when he was a deacon, he had hindered some people to assist some that were in prison for the cause of Christ, and that he had been ordained by these that were Traditors, that is, who had delivered up the Bible to the Persecutors; so thinking the whole church polluted with the fellowship of this man and his fellows, they separated.

When the Lord raised up Luther to reform the church from Popery, then came in the Anabaptists, who rebelled against the magistrate, and taught sedition, and withal pretended, that Luther had made but a half reformation, that he had only cut off the branches of Popery, but they would strike at the root. Hence complained that holy man thus, "It costs us ten years pains to erect a little church, and then comes one that knows nothing, but to rail on faithful ministers, and he in one moment overturns all." And elsewhere he says, "They that received the doctrine of the gospel from us, even they persecute us most bitterly." How our own church was thus troubled in the time of former presbytery, is evident from the writings of worthy men of that time, against separation: So we find an act of the Assembly 1643, "Appointing to search for books tending to separation." I cannot but particularly remark an act of the Assembly 1641, sess. 10. against impiety and schism, wherein they charge, "all ministers and members of this Kirk, to
" endeavour

“ endeavour to suppress all impiety, and mocking of
 “ religious exercises.” And upon the other part,
 “ That, in the fear of God, they be aware, that un-
 “ der the pretext of religious exercises, otherways
 “ lawful and necessary, they fall not into error, he-
 “ resy, schism, scandal, self-conceit, and despising
 “ of others, pressing above the common calling of
 “ Christians, and usurping that which is proper to
 “ the pastoral vocation, contempt or disregard of the
 “ publick means, &c.” This I take plainly to be
 meant of what we call Fellowship Meetings, which
 have been so much mocked by wicked men on the
 one hand, and abused on the other hand to schism,
 &c. But the assembly 1647, sess. 19. in their di-
 rections for secret and private worship, and mutual
 edification, for cherishing piety, for maintaining u-
 nity, and avoiding schism and division, which are
 ordinarily bound in with the *Confession of Faith*, to-
 wards the end of the book, they discharge these
 meetings altogether, as you may see in the seventh
 direction, where they say, “ Whatever hath been
 “ the fruits and effects of meetings of persons of di-
 “ verse families in the times of corruption and trou-
 “ ble, yet such meetings of persons of diverse families,
 “ (except in the cases mentioned in the directions)
 “ are to be disapproved, as tending to the prejudice
 “ or the publick ministry, to the renting of the fa-
 “ milies of particular congregations, and (in pro-
 “ gress of time) of the whole kirk.” I bring not
 in this to shew my own judgment anent these meet-
 ings, but to let you see there was a spirit of separa-
 tion going in these days as well as now, and how
 the fire of division left not this church till she was
 cast into the fire of persecution, is too well known :
 O that it had from that time left us !

I come

I come now to the *second* thing proposed, to give you a few observes as to the rise and way of carrying on this sad plague in churches. And,

1. I say, God has his own holy ends in these things, by these he tries his people, 1 Cor. xi. 18, 19. and thereby he punisheth men for the contempt of the gospel, and not receiving the truth in love, 2 Thes. ii.

2. We find schisms and divisions raised in the church under the plausible pretext of strictness. This was the way how the churches of Galatia were rent in pieces. The corrupt teachers would needs add the observation of Moles' law to the gospel, as if that were a more perfect and strict way. Thus the corrupt teachers among the Colossians pretending great strictness, cry, "touch not, taste not, handle not." Col. ii. 21. This, in part, seems to have been the rise of the schism in Corinth, which the apostle points at in the matter of the Lord's supper, while he says, "Let a man examine himself." 1 Cor. xi. 28. This was the schism of the Novatians and Donatists brought in of old, in that discipline was not exercised as they would have had against these that fell in time of persecution.

3. There are ordinarily some (I hope I am not speaking to these with whom the very scripture text will be accounted treason) there are some, I say, who are at great pains going hither and thither to spread the flame, that compass sea and land to make proselytes; thus we find some travelling from Jerusalem to Antioch thro' Syria and Cilicia, to make disciples and disturb the churches: "Unto the brethren which
" are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain
" which went out from us, have troubled you with
" words, subverting your souls, &c." Acts xv. 23, 24.

4. We

4. We may always observe, that one main thing church renters aim at, is to discredit the ministers of the gospel, as if the word were, fight neither with small nor great but the ministers; for Satan knows, if once the ministry be made contemptible, and their credit sunk, then they will be useless, and if once they were laid by as useless, his kingdom were in a fair way of thriving. These are the wolves, who, tho' they be in sheeps clothing, yet discover themselves by barking at the shepherds: So did Korah. Look the epistles to the Corinthians and Galations, and see how the renters of these churches railed upon and discredited the apostle Paul; they said he was no lawful apostle; hence he is so oft put to clear his call, 1 Cor. ix. 1, 2. Gal. 1. and 2. chap. they sought a proof of Christ speaking in him, 2 Cor. xiii. 3. they charged him with levity and inconstancy, as if his words were not to be regarded, 2 Cor. i. 17. they charged him with walking after the flesh, 2 Cor. xi. 2. they held him out to be a vain glorious person, and a very contemptible man, 2 Cor. xi. 9, 10. see the four last chapters of 2 Corinthians.

5. We often find they have great pretences to holiness, and attainments above ordinary, so they are said to go in sheeps clothing, and to transform themselves into apostles of Christ: And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. 2 Cor. xi 13, 14. and it doth not a little favour their design, that men who have suffered for the cause of Christ are sometimes engaged in it; which is clear from what the apostle says, comparing himself with the renters of the church of Corinth, "Are they ministers of Christ? I am more: "In prison more frequent." 2 Cor. xi. 23. which
clearly

clearly holds forth, that they had been sufferers and prisoners for the cause as well as he; yea really godly persons may be engaged in it, Rev. ii. 20. where we find Jezebel seducing Christ's servants; for sometimes even good men may run the Devil's errands, and yet be saved at last.

Lastly, We may observe what characters the scriptures give such; "Presumptuous are they, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities." 2 Pet. ii. 10. "Proud, (for only by pride cometh contention) knowing nothing, but doting about questions, &c." 1 Tim. vi. 4. In Rom. xvi. 17, 18, they are said to be "such as serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, &c." They are entertained by these "that have itching ears." 2 Tim. iv. 3. See how the apostle strikes at the root of division, "Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Philip. ii. 3. Men that are irritated by a church, vain glorious and conceity, esteeming themselves better than others, are dangerous men, and fit wedges to cleave the church of Christ asunder.

Now I shall name the *second Doctrine*, and then apply.

The 2d Doctrine is, That professors ought to be ware of schism and division, as they tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me apply it in the words of our text, "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment." Dearly beloved

loved, as ye tender the authority and honour of our Lord Jesus Christ, beware of this schism and division that is now troubling this church. I foresee it will be needless for me to offer to press this exhortation with motives, till I have removed three Prejudices out of the way: The *first* is, That they are the strictest party. The *second* is, That the church has given them just ground to separate. The *third* is, That their principles are the principles of our covenanted Reformation. Some, may be, will be amazed to hear us offer to question these things; but I beseech you consider what I say.

The *first* Prejudice then is, That those who dissent and separate from us are the strictest party. In answer to this, consider there is a twofold strictness; a strictness in practice, and a strictness in opinion. As for strictness in the point of a holy practice, life and conversation; though they seem in a late printed paper to appropriate the name of the Godly to their own party, yet God forbid I should appropriate it to ours. Only I shall say, that among these that conscientiously attend the ordinances this day in our church, there are people as eminent for holiness life, and close walking with God, that have as much of the exercise of Godliness upon their spirits, and acquaintance and communion with God, as any in the nation; so far as I can discern. I could say more to this purpose, but that I desire not to give offence. As for the ministry, whatever defects be among them, and tho' there are many of them with whom I have no acquaintance, yet there are among them of whom I could say, (if it were lawful to say it of any man) O that my soul were in their soul's stead! and at whose feet I would willingly sit down and learn the knowledge of Christ and

and practical Godliness: This I declare to be my opinion of them, however low thoughts many have of them. As for strictness of opinions as to government and church communion, if we measure strictness according to the dictates of mens own spirits, we will yield to them for strictness; and so would our Lord to the Pharisees, and the apostles to the false teachers. But if we measure strictness according to the word of God, we deny they are strictest, but they are indeed widest from the rule. I will follow Christ to the synagogue of the Jews; (I hope some of you at least may understand what I say) and in so doing I will be more strict than these that scruple to follow Christ's example, for fear they be involved in the guilt of the corruptions among them; for the nearer I follow Christ, the more strict I am, if strictness be measured according to the word of God. However, this is but an assertion; but it brings me to the second thing, where I shall prove it.

The *second* prejudice is, That the church has given them just ground to separate; and therefore they cry out on the Commission of the General Assembly, for representing them to the world as Schismatics. To this I answer, That it is plain they have made a total separation from us, and refuse communion with us in ordinances, unless it be at some times to serve a turn. If this their separation from us be a sin, then their separation is a schism: But so it is, that their separation from us is sinful, which I shall prove by one argument, not to multiply words. The argument is this, These who reject communion in the ordinances of Christ with a true church, and separate from her, because of corruptions in her, while, in the mean time they might keep communion with her without sin, are guilty of schism and sinful separation; this

I think will not be denied, for if our thus keeping communion be not our sin, it must be our duty; surely it is not left indifferent: But so it is, that our dissenters do thus reject communion with us, and separate from us, while, in the mean time, they might keep communion with this church without sin: Therefore their separation is schism, and they are schismatics. That they might keep communion with us without sin, that is, without involving themselves in the guilt of the corruptions of the church, will appear, if ye consider, that there are no corruptions amongst us, whether real or pretended, which the church obligeth them to approve or join in the practice of, as terms of communion with her. Nor is there any real or pretended truth which they own, that the church obligeth them to renounce, as a term of communion with her. This holdeth absolutely as to the people for Laick Communion, as they call it; and I am sure it has been offered to some of them, that they should be allowed to exoner their own consciences, by protesting against these things which they look upon as corruptions among us, if they would but come and join with us. As for ministerial communion, it must be remembred, that the ministers of this church are obliged to own the *Confession of Faith* as the confession of their faith, which is very just; and if we will believe the leaders of that party, they own it as well as we, so that herein they will move no debate. It remains then that they may keep communion with us without sin, unless mere joining in communion with a church, wherein there are many corruptions, be a sin, and defile a man. To this narrow point, I think the controversy betwixt them and us is brought: This I take to be the very founda-

tion
 and the policy of religion and civil society
 think

dation of the separation, which, if it fall, all falls together with it: And that this is a gross untruth, I shall evince by two arguments. The *first* argument is from Rev. ii. 24, 25. " But unto you, I say, and " unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not " this doctrine,—I will put upon you none other " burden; but that which ye have already, hold fast " till I come." In the church of Thyatira, Jezebel was suffered to teach and seduce Christ's servants; for suffering of her the angel is reproved, and consequently called to amend this fault. The party that kept themselves pure are not required to separate; nay, in effect, are commanded to continue in the communion of that church; while the Lord expressly tells them " he will lay no other burden upon them," but commands them to hold fast, and yet there is not one word anent their separating to keep themselves pure. This could not have been, if their keeping communion with the church of Thyatira, in which there was such gross corruptions, and corrupt members had been a sin.

The *second* Argument is from our Lord's example, " And he came to Nazareth, where he had been " brought up; and, as his custom was, he went in- " to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood " up for to read." Luke iv. 16. What corruptions were in the Jewish church in Christ's day, ye may find by reading of the Gospels; as great, I dare say, as can, in any measure of modesty, be pretended to be in the church of Scotland; and ye will remember they were a covenanted land as well as we; yet our Lord keeps church communion with them in the ordinances of God; tho' he joined not with them in their corruptions, he joined with them in the ordinances, and consequently it was no sin; and

and people may keep themselves from the guilt of corruptions in a church, and yet keep communion with a church wherein these corruptions are. Mark, that it was his custom to go to the Synagogue in the place where he was brought up; for it plainly relates to his custom which he had while he lived a private man in Nazareth, seeing it appears from the context, that this was the first time he was in Nazareth, after he had entered upon the publick exercise of his ministry; which cuts off that exception that Christ went thither only to preach to them. Nay, afterwards, Did he not go to their solemn feasts? This he did also before, and we have plain scripture for his hearing their teachers; "And when he was twelve years old they went up to Jerusalem, after the custom of the feast." Luke ii. 42. and in the verse immediately preceeding, it is said of holy Joseph and Mary, "they went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover," so far were they from separating. And in the 46 verse of that chapter, "they found him in the temple in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions." They that would find this point more largely proved, let them consult *Rutherford's peaceable plea for Presbytery*, and *Durham on Scandal*, and *on the Revelation*, both proving this point against the separatists of their time,

I come now to the *third* Prejudice, and I beseech you bear with me; for if I were to handle this point in an ordinary, ye should not hear so much of it at once. Our great business is to preach Christ, if we could get leave to do it for our divisions. The *third* Prejudice, I say, is, That their principles wherein they differ from us, are the principles of our covenanted Reformation, and that their practices, in the points

points of difference, are agreeable thereto : And so they give it out, that they adhere to our National, and Solemn League and Covenants, *Confession of Faith, Directory, &c.* But we will examine their pretensions in these matters.

First then, As to the National Covenant, I shall take notice of two things : 1. I find these words in the National Covenant : “ This true reformed kirk, “ to the which we join ourselves willingly, in doctrine, faith, religion, discipline, and use of the holy “ sacraments, as lively members of the same, in “ Christ our head, promising and swearing, by the “ great name of the Lord our God, that we shall “ continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline of this kirk.” Let any compare with this the Assembly 1638, their explanation of the National Covenant, as ye have it Sess. 16 of that Assembly, where repeating these foresaid words of the National Covenant, they subsume : “ But so it is, “ that Episcopal government is abhorred and detested, and the government by ministers and elders, in assemblies general and provincial, and “ presbyteries, was sworn to, and subscribed, in subscribing that *Confession*, and ought to be holden “ by us, if we adhere to the meaning of the kirk “ when that *Confession* was framed, sworn to, and “ subscribed, unto which we are obliged by the National Oath and Subscription of this kirk, as is evident by, &c.” Now, I would appeal to the conscience of any separatist, who hath knowledge to discern things that differ, whether or not we have the same doctrine and discipline that they had, when that Covenant was first taken ; and the same doctrine and discipline which the Assembly 1638, declares to be the doctrine and discipline meant in that Covenant,

Covenant, unto which we are obliged by the National Oath. Seeing then we have this same doctrine and discipline, they are, by this National Covenant, obliged to join themselves to the kirk, and to continue in the obedience of the doctrine and discipline thereof; and, by their separating, they make themselves plainly guilty of the breach of this substantial part of the Covenant: And hence, by the by, appears the unreasonableness of speaking so slightly of these days, the doctrine and discipline of that time being that which the National Covenant still binds to. 2. I find, that at the first taking of the Covenant, they swear to maintain the King's authority: As also, when, with additions, it was renewed in the year 1638, they swear to stand to the defence of his Majesty's person and authority. How agrees our dissenters principle, rejecting the authority of the Queen, with this part of the Covenant? O, say they, "She is not a covenanted Queen, and therefore cannot be Queen of a covenanted land." Strange prejudices! Was not Scotland a covenanted land long ever the Solemn League and Covenant was heard tell off? Was not Charles I. King of a covenanted land at that time when the Covenant was renewed, and his authority sworn to be defended? But was he a covenanted king? Did he own their covenant? No, no; upon the contrary he obliged some of their nobles at London to adjure it, declared the Covenanters rebels, and brought down an army against them to force them from it. See *Apologetical Relation*, page 53.

As for the *Solemn League and Covenant*, we find them guilty the same way; it binds us expressly against Schism as well as prelacy, superstition, and heresy. And that they are guilty of schism has been

been proven before. It also bound to the maintaining of the King's authority, it being far from the minds of the Covenanters to cast off the authority of the magistrate, tho' it was entered into without the King's consent: Was it ever the mind of the Covenanters that they would own no King but one that had taken this Covenant? I am sure the parliament of Scotland thought not so, when in the year 1649, they proclaimed and declared to all the world, That *Charles II.* was King of *Great Britain*, &c. their sovereign Lord and King; and this was a full year before he took the Covenant: For which see the *Apologetical Relation*, p. 64, 65. Nor did the General Assembly 1649 think so, when in their letter to the King's Majesty, (to be found among the printed acts of the Assembly in their last session) before he was come home, or had taken the Covenant, they call him "Most gracious Sovereign," and subscribe the letter thus, "Your Majesty's most loyal subjects, and humble servants, the Ministers and Elders convened in this national Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland:" While, in the mean time, they tell him in the same letter, "That he had settled a peace with the Irish Papists, the murderers of so many thousands of his Protestant subjects, and granted to them (contrary to the standing laws of his royal progenitors) a full liberty of their abominable Idolatry; which (say they) cannot be otherways judged, but a giving of your royal power to the Beast;" and they exhort him to lay aside the Service Book. And several other things may be there found, that may make men blush to talk of their agreeing with the church of Scotland in her principles in these times, and yet rejecting the authority of the present Queen. And which

which is most lamentable, even these worthies that laid down their lives for the Covenants, whose testimonies are recorded in *Naphtali* *, having owned the King's authority, and prayed for him on the scaffolds, must, by this new doctrine, be reputed to die as fools, who understood not the Covenants they were laying down their precious lives for. As to the Confession of Faith,

1. How does their refusing to pray for the Queen, to pay her cess, and to own her authority, because she is not a covenanted Queen, agree with the Confession of Faith? chap. 23. §. 4. "It is the duty
" of people to pray for magistrates, to pay them
" tribute and other dues, and to be subject to their
" authority for conscience sake: Infidelity, or dis-
" ference in religion, doth not make void the ma-
" gistrates just and legal authority." I know they will say, that article is meant of lands not covenanted: There had been some shadow of force in this perhaps, if this Confession of Faith had been framed before the Covenant; but, upon the contrary, it was long after, and was the product of the Solemn League and Covenant, as appears from the first article of the Covenant, in these words, "And
" shall endeavour to bring the churches of God, in
" the three kingdoms to the nearest conjunction
" and uniformity in religion, Confession of Faith," &c. The Solemn League and Covenant was sworn in the year 1643, the Confession of Faith was sent hither and approved by the Assembly not till the year 1647, for which see the act of Assembly printed before the Confession. And can we think, that these, who in pursuance of the Covenant framed

* See the Testimonies of the Mar. of Argyle, Warriston, the Ten; these with T. Paterfon, R. Shields, Mr. Robinson, G. Crawford, Mr. Mackait.

ed this Confession of Faith, to declare to the world the faith of the Covenanters, would so juggle, as to put in articles of faith which would bind others, but not themselves?

2. How does their reckoning the taking the oath of Allegiance to the Queen one of the steps of the church's defection, consist with Confession, chap. 22.

§. 2. "A lawful oath, being imposed by lawful authority, in such matters, ought to be taken;" and §. 3 of the same chap. "Yet it is a sin to refuse an oath, touching any thing that is good and just, being imposed by lawful authority." It is true, they reckon her no lawful Queen; but one error will not atone for another. The famous author of the *Apologetical Relation* was not of our dissenters mind, (nay, he thought there had been no Christian of their mind, and for ought I know there were none in these days) for, speaking of the reasons why the oath of Supremacy, called then, tho' falsely, the oath of Allegiance, should be refused, and answering this objection, viz. Such as refuse this oath of Allegiance, declare that they are not dutiful and loyal subjects, he saith, "It hath been shown what difference there is betwixt this oath and the oath of Allegiance; and there is no minister or Christian should scruple at the taking the pure oath of Allegiance," *Apol. Rel.* p. 259. If it was this author's mind that no minister or Christian should have scrupled the oath of Allegiance to King Charles II. when he had taken the Covenant, broken it, and overturned the work of Reformation, sure, he would far less have thought it a sin to take the oath of Allegiance to the present Queen.

3. How doth their separating from this church, lest they be involved in the guilt of the corruptions

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amongst

amongst us, by keeping communion with us, agree with the Confession chap. 26. §. 2. " Saints, by
 " profession, are bound to maintain an holy fellow-
 " ship and communion in the worship of God,—
 " which communion, as God offereth opportunity,
 " is to be extended to all these, who in every place,
 " call upon the name of the Lord Jesus."

4. How doth that principle of theirs, sometime at least owned by them, tho' left out in their last paper against " the power of the magistrates to call
 " assemblies," agree with Confession chap. 31. §. 2. " As magistrates may lawfully call a synod of mi-
 " nisters, and other fit persons, to consult and ad-
 " vise with about matters of religion : " And with act of Assembly 1638, sess. 26. concerning yearly General Assemblies, where they say, " If, in the
 " mean time, it shall please the King's Majesty to
 " indite a General Assembly, ordaineth all presby-
 " teries, universities and burghs, to send their com-
 " missioners, for keeping the time and place which
 " shall be appointed by his majesty's proclama-
 " tion?" they cry out on the incroachment of the magistrates in dissolving of assemblies; but as our assemblies are constituted in the name of Christ, so are they dissolved in his name. What dissolution the magistrate makes, is looked upon as the dismissing of the members. There have indeed been incroachments made by the magistrate in dissolving assemblies before they had done their business, and there have been protestations made against this. And tho', in the late paper, they charge the church for not protesting against the incroachments, and recording the same; yet, that protestations have not been made against them, is an untruth: But where the magistrate's deed is not recorded, neither are the

the protestations recorded. I was eye and ear witness to the magistrate's raising the Assembly in the midst of business; and protestations were made against it, and for the church's intrinsick power; and, from every corner of the house, members adhering thereto; and this protesting is recorded in the acts of Assembly. So that from my certain knowledge, I can say, they speak an untruth in that charge in the declinature: Yea, I have the acts of the Assembly by me, where they, or any that question the truth of what I say, may read it with their own eyes,

5. How doth their rejecting and despising the testimony of the Commission of the General Assembly against the Union, and reproaching them for it, because it was given in to the Parliament by way of humble address, and not by way of protestation, agree with Confession chap. 31. §. 5. "Synods and
" councils are to handle and conclude nothing but
" that which is ecclesiastical, and are not to inter-
" meddle with civil affairs, which concern the Com-
" monwealth, unless by way of humble petition in
" cases extraordinary, or by way of advice for sa-
" tisfaction of conscience, if they be thereunto re-
" quired by the civil magistrate?"

Lastly, How does their crying out on the magistrate's occasional appointing of fasts and thanksgivings, agree with the Confession of Faith, allowing the magistrate to call Assemblies? This I spoke to formerly in another sermon. And further, how agrees it with the last paragraph of the Directory concerning publick solemn fasting, where we have these words, "Besides solemn and general fasts en-
" joined by authority, we judge, &c?" It may be observed how frequently the apostles enjoin obedience to magistrates and honouring of them: "I
" exhort

" exhort therefore, that prayers be made for kings,
 " and for all that are in authority." 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2.
 " Let every soul be subject to the higher powers,
 " &c." Rom. xiii. 1. " Put them in mind to be
 " subject to principalities and powers, to obey ma-
 " gistrates." Tit. iii. 1. And also 1 Pet. ii. 13. and
 downwards. All which may shew us, that we have
 no more right to take away the fifth command out
 of the Decalogue, that requires obedience to magi-
 strates, than the Papists have to take away the se-
 cond, which condemns their Idolatry. I think there
 is a strange inclination among some that profess re-
 ligion, not only amongst dissenters, but others, to
 speak evil of dignities, and to embrace every thing
 that may make against the magistrate; so that the
 murdering of King Charles I. wherewith presbyte-
 rians are slandered by Papists and malignants, is
 owned and adopted by some, as if it had been a
 laudable action. Wo is me! that ignorance and
 an inclination to vilify magistrates, should give such
 an handle to the enemy against us. If it was such
 a glorious action, the sectaries must have the glory
 of it; for it was they, and not Presbyterians, that
 did the deed; and it was protested against by the
 commissioners both from the church and state of
 Scotland, for which they were hardly used at Lon-
 don; see *Apol. Rel.* p. 64. Yea, the General As-
 sembly 1649, gave their testimony against it in
 their seasonable warning, sess. 27. they say, " That
 " prevailing party of sectaries in England, who have
 " broken the Covenant,—and taken away the
 " King's life, look upon us with an evil eye." And
 in their exhortation to their brethren in England,
 " We have obtained this mercy, to be stedfast to
 " our old principles, in bearing free and faithful
 " testimony against their proceedings, both in re-
 " fERENCE

“ference to the toleration and government, and
 “the taking away the King’s life.” And in their
 letter to the King, “We do from our hearts abo-
 “minate and detest that horrid fact of the sectaries,
 “against the life of your royal father our sove-
 “reign.” Both which are to be found in the last
 session of that Assembly.

Let me now renew my exhortation, and press it.
 “I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord
 “Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing,
 “and that there be no divisions among you.” Be-
 ware of division yourselves, and give your help to re-
 cover, in all tenderness, these that have withdrawn,
 and encourage them not in their way. I am per-
 swaded, that if they were not so much countenan-
 ced and encouraged by these that are the hearers,
 the number of such would not be so great as it is.
 Let not that itching ear get place with you, so as to
 run away to their meetings whenever ye have op-
 portunity, and so to cast yourselves into a snare,
 and to do what in you lies to strengthen the divisi-
 on, and trample on the grave authority of the
 church, whereby one of their preachers is deposed
 from the ministry, and the other, who never was a
 minister, his licence to preach is declared null and
 void; and both are certified, that if they repent
 not and amend their ways, they shall be excommu-
 nicate. I know it is said, that it is thought strange,
 the commission threatneth to censure these men with
 the highest censures of the church, while yet they
 declare them to be none of their communion. But
 I think it more strange to find men amused with
 this, who, tho’ some curates, and others who have
 been censured by this church, who were as little of
 our communion as these men, yet are dissatisfied
 that

that the church does not censure more of them, and that more severely. Beware then of this division, I beseech you,

1. For their sakes that have withdrawn, that ye may not confirm them in their course, tending so much to the disadvantage of their souls, in withdrawing from the means of grace and knowledge, which they stand in need of as well as others. O, sirs, be concerned this way ; the Lord's people are of an uniting and gathering spirit, " And they shall " bring all your brethren for an offering to the " Lord, out of all nations, upon horses, and in chariots, and in litters,—to my holy mountain." Isa. lxvi. 20. They shall bring them not by force, but by gospel motives. But some of them are far off ; what then ? yet they shall bring them ; may be they cannot walk, then shall they bring them on horses ; may be they are so weak they cannot ride on horses, then they shall get chariots ; some may be so sickly they cannot come in chariots, then they shall come in litters that are for carrying of sick folk : But by all means they will endeavour to bring them to the mountain of the Lord. Some will not concern themselves this way, but let every one do as they please in these matters. But O for this gathering spirit !

2. I beseech you for the sake of those, both amongst them and us, that have no religion. O, sirs, what should come of the many perishing souls up and down Scotland, that are strangers to Christ and their own soul's state, if, as these men would have it, all should leave us, and we be left to preach to the toom walls, or hold our tongues ? Will they be able for the whole kingdom ?

3. I beseech you, for your own sakes, have pity on your souls, cast not away your spiritual food; yield not so to Satan, who, if he could, would set you at variance with the ordinances, because he well knows that men in that case may get greater ease in their lusts, for it will be long before a reproof get reached from the pulpit to the fields, or their fire-sides. I am very apprehensive, that the preaching of the word, as being levelled at peoples state, and ease of their souls before the Lord, has been over hot for some, that has made them withdraw from ministers, as men that tormented them that dwell upon the earth.

4. I beseech you for the church's sake, whose beauty is marred with division: "Look not upon me because I am black,—my mother's children were angry with me." Cant. i. 6. There is no danger from enemies without, like that from divisions within. The unity of the church would be the stability of it: "Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken." Isa. xxxiii. 20. Tho' the kingdoms of the world be built on mountains, yet they shall fall; but the church, when she is a quiet habitation, tho' she be but a tent, she shall stand; and tho' that tent be but fixed with stakes, yet they shall not be removed; tho' it be fixed but with cords, not with great ropes, yet none of them shall be broken. Division mars reformation in a church. It is very remarkable how discipline was weakened in the church of Corinth; divisions were so hot there, the incestuous man was tolerated amongst them, they could not get that work minded or plied for

for

for the contentions among them, " For then will I
 " turn to the people a pure language, that they
 " may all call upon the name of the Lord, to serve
 " him with one consent." Zeph. iii. 9. There is a
 reforming time, and then they will serve the Lord
 with one consent; so we read it: But in the first
 language it is *one Shoulder*, they shall, as it were,
 all set one shoulder to the Lord's work, and then
 the work cannot but prosper.

5. I beseech you for minister's their sakes: Mini-
 sters are made very odious this day by the dividers
 of the church. But we hope they have not made
 such impressions on you, but that you, at least some
 of you, will do something for our sake. Our re-
 quest then is, that ye would not burden our spirits
 with division; that ye would not mar the Lord's
 work in our hands, and make our work a burden
 to us; ye see that in other things we are not mere
 Ignorants more than yourselves; that in other
 things we are not men of prostitute consciences
 more than yourselves: Must a man then be account-
 ed quite ignorant of his duty, or one that will go
 over the belly of his own light, in things properly
 belonging to his office, just because he is a minister
 of this church this day? Be astonished at this, O ye
 heavens! be horribly afraid O earth! I am sure it
 is a changed world with some, to whom it may be
 said in the words of the apostle: " And my temp-
 " tation which was in my flesh ye despised not,—
 " but received me as an angel of God;—Where is
 " then the blessedness ye spake of? For I bear you
 " record, that if it had been possible, ye would
 " have plucked out your own eyes, and have given
 " them to me. Am I therefore become your ene-
 " my because I tell you the truth? They zealously
 " affect

"affect you, but not well: They would exclude
"you, that ye might affect them." Gal. iv. 14,--17.

Lastly, I beseech you, for Christ's sake, that ye
beware of division; I beseech you for the sake of
the Prince of Peace, who, in his solemn prayer,
prayed for the uniting of his people, and lays an a-
stonishing weight on it, "That they all may be
"One,—that the world may believe that thou hast
"sent me;" For his sake, who, in the night
wherein he was betrayed, instituted the sacrament
of his supper, to seal our Union and Communion
with God, and with one another: For his sake who
laid down his life to procure our peace with God,
and shed his precious blood to unite his Elect,
"For he is our peace, who hath made both one,
"and has broken down the middle wall of parti-
"tion betwixt us." Ephes. ii. 14. As ye tender
the authority, as ye tender the honour of our Lord
Jesus Christ, beware of division. As ye would have
his presence with, and blessing upon the church and
upon the parish, beware of division; "Behold, how
"good and how pleasant it is, for brethren to
"dwell together in unity; for there the Lord com-
"manded the blessing, even life for evermore."
Psal. cxxxiii. 1. 3. And so I close with that of
the Apostle, 2 Cor. xiii. 11. "Finally, brethren,
"farewel; be perfect, be of good comfort, be of
"one mind, live in peace; and the God of love
"and peace shall be with you." Now to the God
of peace, even to the Father the fountain of peace,
to the Son the purchaser of peace, to the Holy
Ghost the worker of peace, be glory and praise, for
ever and ever. AMEN.

F I N I S.

and you, but not well: They would exclaim
 you, "these might as well be dead." Cal. iv. 14-17.
 I say, I beseech you, for Christ's sake, have ye
 name of Christ; I beseech you for the sake of
 a Prince of Peace, who is the Prince of
 Peace for the making of his people, and says an-
 nouncing well to all, "That they all may be
 One," that the world may believe that thou hast
 sent me; For his sake, who, in the night
 when he was betrayed, fulfilled the Testament
 his blood, to the new Union and Communion
 the Church and his own; and now, for the sake who
 I beseech him to procure that peace with God,
 that his precious blood to unite his Elect,
 For he is our Peace, who hath made both one,
 and has broken down the middle wall of parti-
 tion between us. Eph. ii. 14. Ye are to be
 one, as ye are one, as ye are one, as ye are one.
 As ye would have
 the Church to be one, as ye are one, as ye are one,
 on the earth, so we of heaven, "Heavenly
 peace, and lowliness is his, for he himself
 dwells in us; in us; in us; in us; in us; in us;
 made the dwelling, even his for evermore."
 Oh, exclaim, "And to be one with him of
 a Father, a Son, and a Holy, precious,
 Holy; be peace, be of one consent, be of
 one mind, be in peace; and the God of love
 and peace shall be with you." Now to the God
 of peace, even to the Father the Father of peace,
 the Father of peace, the Father of peace, to the Holy
 Spirit the Holy Spirit, be glory and praise, for
 ever and ever. Amen.



T 1 N 12